

To the Editor.

Sir—As I have been pretty intimately acquainted with education matters for over 40 years I should know a little of such affairs. I have been sorry to see the state of discontent for some time gradually spreading over the whole system. Notwithstanding the free high schools there certainly has never been such a prosperous time in South Australia for all private schools and colleges as at present. Numbers of our best young men are constantly leaving the service. Take the Advanced School for Girls, which was considered one of the best girls' schools in the Commonwealth; the students were eagerly sought after as teachers by other schools. This has now sunk into oblivion, much to the benefit of private and sectarian schools. It appears to me that those having the direction of affairs can never have had experience in managing anything more than a lot of small children, and the present rupture with the University Training School students seems to have been gradually brought on by small pinpricks, such as no one with consideration for other people's feelings would indulge in. The students appear also to have the sympathy of the assistants. I should like to take the official statements in Tuesday's issue and explain some matters. Demand for Holidays.—First the Director omits to say that these "requests" were all made before the commencement of the University term. The students thought to take the first opportunity to become mutually acquainted, as coming from all parts of the State, it being probable that they would be in some measure working together for the rest of a lifetime, and having the same aims in view they did not consider the request unreasonable before the University work commenced. The Request of a Half Day for a Cricket Match.—The Director states that he would recommend that Wednesday afternoons be granted on condition that the time was made up, but as Saturday mornings were suggested the students did not fall in with it, and perhaps feel the determined attempt to separate them from the ordinary University students. Exemption from Teaching.—The students first approached their principals over a week before the examinations came on. They pointed out that a morning's teaching in a strange school and class, under the especial supervision of one or two superiors, and the preparation of the lesson would unfit them for their examination later in the day. This, for some at least, owing to it being their first "test," would mean life or death to their subsequent course. With this the principals concurred, and willingly referred the matter to the Director, who gave a curt refusal. The students requested a reconsideration, which was again refused. Meanwhile, unfortunately, the fact of the students having unanimously agreed not to teach on those mornings leaked out through the public press, and they probably feel unable to withdraw. The first batch not attending their various schools for teaching, but remaining at the University studying up for their examination, were called the next morning before the Director, and after a good fatherly talk and warning were informed that their fault would be overlooked for that time, but they must pay a small fine, and if they offended again would be instantly dismissed. And so the matter appeared to end, and should have been allowed to. The point in connection with other teachers wanting the same concession does not apply, as it is a different matter between the students' special lesson and the teachers' ordinary lesson for the teacher leaving his class unprovided for. From the Director's statement it does not appear that the students are likely to be overworked; but, in addition to their University subjects, they have nearly as much other work under the Education Department as would be taken up by the entire course of the private students at the University. This, I know, some gladly undertake in their endeavour to become proficient in their work. Still it is no wonder some break down in health. Question of University Degrees.—With a good deal of this I thoroughly agree, and certainly the first thing should be to learn to teach, which a University degree would only assist, but the whole tone of the Director's remarks shows a bias in this direction, and strengthens my previous impression that at the least no encouragement is given the students to obtain their degree. A Subject for Taxpayers.—Only recently a statement of the comparative cost of education in all the States gave South Australia as far below all others, and the sum of £30 per annum for a young man of from 20 to 25 does not seem very extravagant, especially considering they have just completed two years' work at the salary of £30 and £40 per annum, during which they have probably been taking charge of classes of from 40 to 80 children. Action of the Minister.—Certainly there must be proper discipline in any case, but this part seems like throwing fat on the fire and not oil on the

troubled waters. The Minister can scarcely have been advised of all the facts or he would probably have seen some better way out of the present difficulty, and I trust some wise counsel will yet prevail to end the matter as speedily as possible.

I am, Sir, &c.,
ANOTHER PARENT.

To the Editor.

Sir—As a member of the general public and one who is interested in the efficient and proper government and control of our public education, I must express my regret at the disagreement which has arisen between the University students and the Director. Judging by the press information published in The Register, and the highly informative letter appearing in Wednesday's issue above the name of E. Lambert, I am satisfied that the students are badly used, and that the Director is abusing the power placed in his hands. I sincerely hope that no student will so far abase him or herself by making the uncalled for apology demanded by the educational Czar, but that a fair and independent enquiry into the matter will be made by an unbiased authority. In the meantime, I say, "Students, hold your own."
I am, Sir, &c., MALVERN.

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THE UNIVERSITY TRAINING COLLEGE.

The recent strike of University Training College students, while apparently of a trifling character, has its serious aspects, which are not without a touch of humour. If every pupil refused to do his lesson when he thought the imposition excessive, the lot of the teacher would be far from a happy one, and soon his vocation would disappear. Here we have a number of young teachers who, in the course of a few years, may exercise authority in their own schools, disregarding directions not less arbitrary than they themselves will be obliged to give. How can they expect or exact obedience who have not learnt to obey? If the main essential of education is tone, then a school system without effective discipline is like Hamlet without Hamlet. Both sides of the dispute between the Director of Education and the University Training College students have been fully stated, and it is clear that the latter were not asked to perform an impossible or an unreasonable task. Teachers other than Training College students have taken the "terminal" University examinations without seeking any exemption from their ordinary teaching duties, and many University students, notably law students, are also simultaneously engaged in practical work. The terminal examination was not in the nature of a severe or protracted or exhausting trial; and even if the department requirement appeared to be burdensome, the students were ill-advised to take the law into their own hands, and attempt to redress their grievance by defying authority. They could at least have appealed direct to the Minister of Education, who would have caused enquiry to be made into all the circumstances, and formed an independent judgment. When, however, they chose to band themselves together in an act of wilful disobedience, Mr. Peake was bound to uphold the authority of the department, and the Minister cannot well recede from the moderate but firm attitude which he has taken. After further consideration, the parties concerned should see the wisdom of accepting the mild terms offered for their return to the college.

Evidently there has been some misunderstanding concerning the functions of the University Training College. The Director of Education is quite sound in his contention that its chief business is to produce practical teachers, not University graduates, and the experience of other similar institutions indicates that it is a mistake to provide a University course except to those who have first undergone training in practical teaching, and given proof of special ability and promise. It is much to be regretted that in the attempt to place the Training College on a basis just alike to the teaching profession, and the taxpayer, the Director, who has never spared himself in his zeal for the cause of education, should, at this juncture, meet with difficulties in a quarter from which he might reasonably have expected sympathy and co-operation. It is, however, fair to assume that the teachers have been led away through the impetuosity and inexperience of youth, and that upon due reflection they will yield to mature counsels, and recognise that they have taken up an untenable position, retirement from which will be an act of wisdom and honour.

Advertiser, May 25

THE QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY.

Queensland is to have a University. Parliament has passed the necessary Act, and voted an annual grant of £10,000, and Government House, Brisbane, has been set apart as the home of the new seat of learning. There remains much to be done in the way of organisation, but the work has been taken in hand by the senate appointed a couple of months ago, and is being pushed on with all possible speed. Applications are about to be invited for filling the chairs of classics, chemistry, physics, and mathematics, and engineering, to which salaries of £900 yearly have been attached, and when these appointments have been made lecturers will be appointed. Mr. Henderson, one of the members of the council, in the course of a conversation in Sydney on Wednesday, said the standard for the matriculation examination would be much about the same as in Sydney except that Latin would not be a compulsory subject. "Our idea," he continued, "is to keep the entrance door as wide open as we can, and to maintain a high standard for the degrees. The standard for English language and literature will be a high one. Government assistance includes the granting of 20 entrance scholarships, tenable for three years, with a grant of £25 a year to students who can live at home, and of £50 to those who will have to live away from home during their course. These will be competed for at the first matriculation examination. The arts course will carry a fee of £10 10/ yearly for matriculated students, and the science course the maximum fee, including laboratory charges, will be £18 18/. Arts, science, and engineering will be the first courses taken in hand. The science course will be one of the strong features of the University. Government House will provide all the accommodation necessary in classrooms, &c., for several years. There are spacious grounds attached, on which additional buildings can be erected as they become necessary. Laboratories are to be erected and fitted up, and the Government propose to erect upon the site the Central Technical College.